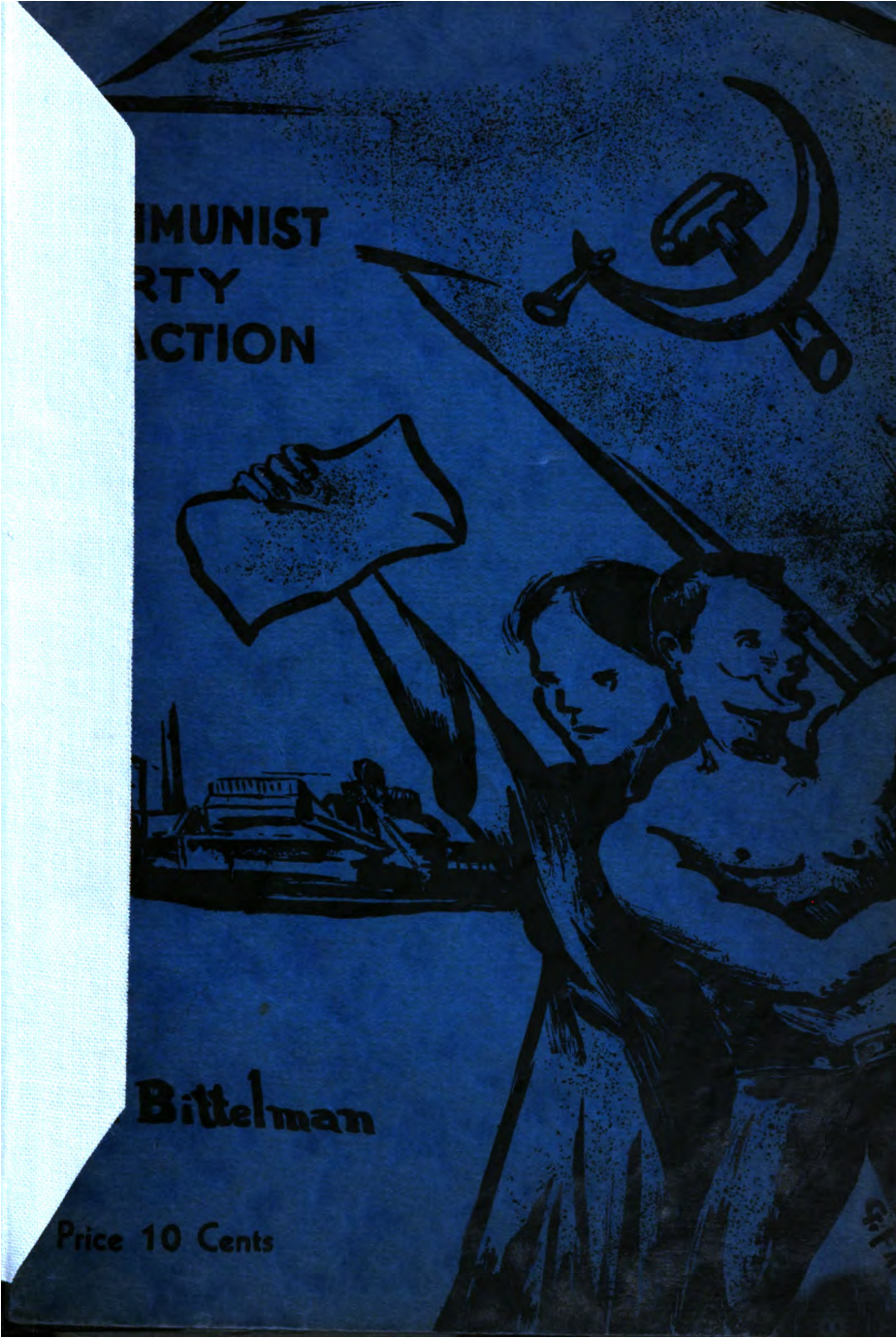
IMUNIST
RTY
CTION
Bittelman
Price 10 Cents

THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN ACTION

By ALEX BITTELMAN

CHAPTER 1

You Have Joined the Revolutionary Party of the American Proletariat

FIGHTING DAY BY DAY UNDER COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERSHIP

You have joined the Communist Party of the United States of America because you have seen it in action as the revolutionary Party of the American proletariat You have joined the Party because you have participated with thousands and thousands of other workers in the struggles against the capitalist offensive led by the Communist Party.

In other words, it is through your experiences in the class struggle, under the guidance of the Party, supplemented perhaps by some reading of Communist literature, that you have come to be a Communist, signifying this by joining the Party.

It is necessary that you reflect now a little more deeply over these experiences because only in this way will you reach a clearer understanding of the tasks and role of the Party, as well as of the tasks and role of each individual member of the Party.

Let us consider your experiences in the factory struggles. Through these struggles you have been engaged in fighting against your employer for various economic demands, for the improvement of the conditions of yourself and your shop-mates. These struggles you may have carried on as a member of a revolutionary union, say, of the National Miners Union, if you are a miner;

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

or as a member of the National Textile Workers Union, if you are employed in a textile mill; or as a member of the Needle Trades Industrial Union, if you are a garment worker; or as a member of the Agricultural Workers Union, if you are an agricultural worker.

These struggles you may have carried on as a member or follower of the revolutionary oppositions in the unions of the American Federation of Labor. In the course of these struggles you have undoubtedly learned that the unions of the Trade Union Unity League and the revolutionary oppositions in the unions of the American Federation of Labor stand on the platform of the class struggle and in this way differ fundamentally from the policies of the reformist leaders of the American Federation of Labor, who stand on the basis of class collaboration, that is, the platform of surrender to the capitalist class, the platform of betrayal of the interests of the workers to the interests of the capitalists. It is also possible that you have not been a member of any of these unions, which, of course, is an error. Members of the Communist Party must be members of trade unions, either the revolutionary unions, affiliated to the Trade Union Unity League, or reformist unions, as the policy of the Party may require.

In any event, there are a number of fundamental things that you have undoubtedly already discovered as the result of your economic struggles in the factory under revolutionary leadership. This is that the daily struggles in the shop for the economic demands of the workers (strikes, etc.), offer one of the chief weapons for combatting the capitalist offensive which seeks a capitalist way out of the crisis, the other chief weapons being the fight for unemployment relief and insurance, the fight against the imperialist war on China, and for the defense of the Soviet Union, the fight against capitalist reaction, the lynching and national oppression of the Negroes, etc.; that these strike struggles must be thoroughly prepared on the basis of the widest united front of the workers from below; and that in order to be really effective for the improvement of the condi-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

tions of the workers, for the building up of the proletarian counter-offensive which will prepare and strengthen the working class for the final overthrow of capitalist rule, these daily economic struggles must be headed by a revolutionary leadership, whose complete and all-inclusive expression is the Communist Party. You have also seen the treacherous role of the Lovestone and Trotsky-Cannon renegades in the recent strikes, where these renegades served as the spearhead for Green, Lewis and Schlesinger, to demoralize the fighting front of the workers.

Similar experiences you must have derived from your participation in the other current struggles of the American working class. Let us mention, for instance, the fight against unemployment and for unemployment relief and insurance. Through your participation in these struggles, whether they be hunger marches, demonstrations, anti-eviction fights, etc., you couldn't have escaped the conclusion that not only is the Communist Party the only political party fighting really for unemployment relief and insurance, but also that the Communist Party is organizing and leading the masses in such a way as to educate them and strengthen them for the final overthrow of the capitalist dictatorship and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

While participating in the unemployment struggles you may have become a member of one of the numerous Unemployed Committees that are organizing the masses to fight for unemployment relief. If so, you already have a practical knowledge of the importance of these organizations for the carrying on of the fight against unemployment. You will now find out that the Party attaches the utmost importance to the struggle for unemployment relief and insurance, as one of the chief weapons for combatting the capitalist offensive which seeks a capitalist way out of the crisis, and to the building up and strengthening of the unemployed committees and councils.

It is, of course, impossible to say which particular experience in the class struggle was decisive for your

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

joining the Communist Party. Rather it must have been the sum of many experiences on various points of the class struggle front, among which the fight against imperialist war and for the defense of the Soviet Union had undoubtedly played a very great part in bringing you into the ranks of the Party. This is the case with many workers who join the Communist Party because it is the only Party that is following in the footsteps of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, that is, organizing the American proletariat to follow the example of the working class of Russia led by the Communist (Bolshevik) Party. It is quite likely that you have come into the Party especially through your participation in the anti-imperialist struggles, anti-war campaigns, and the fight for the defense of the Soviet Union that the Communist Party is leading. Possibly you are a member of the Friends of the Soviet Union, or of the Anti-Imperialist League. If so, you can already see the great role that these organizations are playing in the struggle against the capitalist class.

In reflecting upon the experiences that made you decide to join the Party, one cannot miss such a basic part of the class struggle and of the struggle against imperialism as the fight for Negro rights. Whether you are Negro or white, you must have realized by now that the daily struggle for the abolition of the discrimination and the special persecutions of the white ruling class against the Negro masses, particularly the struggle against lynchings and the defense of the Negroes from the lynchers, is one of the most fundamental phases of the revolutionary fight for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the capitalist class in the United States. You will now gain a deeper understanding of the Communist position on this question which says that the American working class cannot hope to liberate itself from the yoke of capitalism unless it helps to liberate the oppressed Negro masses from the national oppression of this same white ruling class. Especially if you are a white worker, that is, a worker belonging to the dominating nationality, it is your duty to stand in the very

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032832s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

front ranks of the struggle for equal rights for the Negro masses and for their final liberation, propagating and fighting for the right of the Negroes in the Black Belt (in the South) to self-determination, including the right of separation from the United States.

Another phase of the class struggle, which has no doubt contributed towards your joining the Party, is the fight against the increasing use of fascist methods of oppression, against the political reaction of the capitalist class and its government. By this we mean the struggle against the attacks of the government, its police, army, and courts, upon workers that are on strike, the brutal attacks upon workers' meetings, picket lines and demonstrations, the jailings, beatings and outright killings of striking workers and their leaders, especially the Communist Party and the revolutionary unions. These are some of the manifestations of the political reaction of the capitalist class, the progressive fascization of its government apparatus, all of which is directed towards the breaking up and crushing by all possible means the struggles of the masses for the improvement of their conditions. This is now becoming a measure of war preparations of American imperialism, especially against the Soviet Union. An essential part of this capitalist political reaction is the sharpening attacks upon the foreign born workers, the wholesale deportations of these workers, the systematic efforts to introduce legislation for the finger-printing and registration of the foreign born workers, in order to terrorize them into submission, in order to drive a wedge between them and the native born American workers. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, ever larger numbers of American workers, native and foreign born, white and black, are participating in the fight against the political reaction of the capitalist class, and for the defense of workers' rights. For these struggles some special organizations have been created, such as the International Labor Defense and the Council for the Protection of the Foreign Born, organizations that embrace all workers, regardless of their political affiliation, a

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

united front of the masses for the fight against the political reaction of the ruling class, and for the defense of workers' rights under the leadership of the Party. Your experiences in this field of struggle must have played a large part in your decision to join the Party which is the leader and organizer of these fights.

And last, but not least, your experiences of the class struggle on the parliamentary field, that is, in various election campaigns—congressional elections, presidential elections, state and municipal elections, etc. You have voted Communist because you considered correctly that the Communist Party is the only class Party of the workers, and leader of all the oppressed, the only true anti-capitalist Party. By joining the Party you have demonstrated your understanding that voting alone for the Communist program and ticket in an election campaign is not sufficient, that only as a member of the Party, participating daily in the building up of the Party's strength and influence among the masses, also for the extra parliamentary struggle, can you become fully effective in the fight for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the capitalist class, in the fight to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in the United States.

Now, if you were to sum up your experiences in the various fields of the class struggle in their relation to your joining the Party, you would undoubtedly express it in the following way: The individual daily struggles of the workers against capitalist exploitation, in which you participated at various times and on various occasions, are really not isolated and separate events, but constitute so many links in one chain—the chain of class struggle of the working class against the capitalist class, a struggle which aims at the overthrow of capitalist rule, the abolition of the capitalist system, and the building up of Socialism as the first stage of Communism, through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of a Soviet government. And then you would say: The Communist Party is that Party which brings to the masses the consciousness and understanding of the meaning of this

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

struggle. It leads the masses and organizes them for this struggle, drawing into its own ranks the most advanced and most conscious elements of the working class, thus building itself up as the vanguard and the leader of the entire class.

If you are a small farmer, perhaps a tenant farmer or share cropper, your conclusions will be substantially the same, although you may have arrived at these conclusions by a somewhat different route than the industrial and agricultural worker. You have realized by now that the only way out for the small and exploited farmers from the agricultural and general crisis of capitalism, from the exploitation and oppression of the big landlords, the bankers and their government, is the overthrow of the dictatorship of the capitalist class and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat —a Soviet government. You have also realized by now that the only way to resist the offensive of the exploiters upon the exploited and to improve the conditions of the small farmers, is for them to fight side by side with the industrial proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party—to fight as the ally of the working class for the partial and immediate demands of the exploited farming masses and for the overthrow of the whole capitalist system. By joining the Party, you have accepted the philosophy and point of view of the proletariat, which is the only consistent revolutionary class able to lead the liberation struggle of all the exploited from the yoke of capitalist oppression. You have accepted the fundamental principle of Leninism that the proletariat must exercise the hegemony in the revolution against capitalism, and you will strive to win the masses of small and exploited farmers for the revolutionary struggle against the capitalist offensive, organizing and leading their daily struggles for the improvement of their conditions, cementing the alliance between the proletariat and the small farmers under the hegemony of the proletariat and the leadership of the Communist Party.

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

DEVELOPING THE PROLETARIAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

As a Communist, as a member of the Party, you will begin to appreciate much more than heretofore the significance and importance of Party policies for the development of the class struggle. Our Party is a Leninist Party. This means, in the first instance, that its policies are based upon a thorough Marxian analysis of the objective conditions, of the relation of class forces, of the mood and political maturity of the masses. The Party policy arrived at by such a sober Marxian analysis constitutes the Party's guide to action. With these policies the Party as a whole, and each individual member, steps forward into the masses to arouse and organize them for such immediate objectives and with such methods of struggle and forms of organization as provided by the policies of the Party.

In the present period the Party's chief task consists in developing the counter-offensive of the working class against the offensive of the capitalist class, including the organization of the Negro masses and of the small and exploited farmers as allies of the proletariat. This task, which is common to the Communist Parties of all imperialist and colonial countries, and which was laid down by the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, arises from the objective conditions that are characteristic of the present period.

What are these objective conditions? It is primarily the present economic crisis, which is the greatest world economic crisis in history, affecting every imperialist and colonial country and every branch of capitalist economy—industry, commerce, agriculture and finance. The reason why the present economic crisis is so widespread and deep, and why the extent of unemployment and the suffering of the masses are so tremendously great, is the outstanding fact that the present economic crisis is developing on the basis of the ***general crisis of capitalism,*** which is shattering the whole capitalist system, leading to the development of colonial and proletarian revolutions, and which has already re-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

sulted in the emergence of a base of a new world system—the ***Socialist system*** in the Soviet Union.

Periodic, recurrent economic crises are inseparable from capitalism. We have had many of them in the past—an economic crisis about every seven or eight years. At the bottom of these periodic economic crises lies one of the basic contradictions of the capitalist system, the contradiction between the ***social*** character of production and the ***private*** capitalist ownership of the means of production with the consequent exploitation, robbery and enslavement of the masses, the subjection of capitalism to market competition and rivalry, to planlessness and anarchy of production. This basic contradiction of capitalism is at the bottom also of the present economic crisis which, because it develops on the basis of the general crisis of the decaying capitalist system and the gigantic growth of the Socialist system in the Soviet Union, is assuming ever deeper and wider proportions.

Confronted with the ever deepening crisis, and the growing revolutionary upsurge of the masses, which is shaking capitalism to its very foundations, the capitalist class is fighting for a way out of the crisis by means of, first, a most intense attack upon the standard of living of the working class and the toiling masses generally; second, by means of new wars, for the re-distribution of the world among the imperialist powers, and, in the first place, by means of war against the Soviet Union and against the liberation movements of the oppressed colonial peoples. This is what we understand by the attempts of the bourgeoisie to find a capitalist way out of the crisis. We see the manifestations of these attempts in the ever-sharpening attacks of the capitalists upon the workers (wage cuts, growing unemployment, fascist terror, etc.). We see these manifestations also in the present imperialist robber war against China carried on by Japanese imperialism with the support of the other imperialist powers that are aiming to extend the war against China into a war also against the Soviet Union. At the same time these imperialist powers are

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

fighting among themselves over the division of the loot, each of them trying to secure the largest spoils for itself.

In the face of this offensive of the capitalist class, the Communist Party undertakes to organize the masses and lead them into struggle to defend themselves from the attacks of the capitalist offensive and for the development of a proletarian counter-offensive. This is the Party's chief task in the present period—a task which involves the systematic exposure of the social-demagogy of the imperialists and the social-fascist agents that are playing with the needs and miseries of the masses in order to deceive them and break up their struggles.

In order to fulfill this task the Party is carrying on a merciless struggle against the social fascists, exposing their demagogy, and against social fascism generally, as an agency of the capitalist class in the labor movements, as the chief social support of imperialism. The importance of this struggle must not be underestimated. Your own experiences with the treacheries and demagogy of social fascism in the class struggle must have already convinced you that the leadership of the American Federation of Labor, the Socialist Party, and similar reformist groupings are nothing else but the agents of the ruling class within the working class, whose function it is to deceive, demoralize the workers, and to break up their struggles against the exploiters. Further reflections upon the role of the social fascists, with the help of a conscientious study of the Leninist analysis on this question, will show you that social fascism has become the main social support of the capitalist class. This means, that the shattering of the influence of social fascism upon the working class, is one of the most important conditions for the overthrow of capitalist rule.

It is for this reason that the exposure of the betrayals of the social fascists, the fight for winning the masses of workers away from the social fascist leaders, is part

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

and parcel of the fight to organize the proletarian counter-offensive.

THE NEED FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS

By joining the Party you have signified your conviction that the interests of the working class dictate a revolutionary way out of the crisis. The program of the Communist Party offers the road for the achievement of the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

Ever larger numbers of American workers, the same as the workers in other capitalist countries, are beginning to question the possibility of any solution of the crisis that would benefit the working class, other than the revolutionary way out, that is, the way that leads to the overthrow of the dictatorship of the capitalist class and the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class. The intolerable sufferings for the workers brought about by the crisis, and the pressure of the capitalist offensive which is aiming to achieve a capitalist solution of the crisis, is compelling increasingly larger masses of workers to participate in the organization of the proletarian counter-offensive, and is setting the workers to thinking on the need of a revolutionary way out of the crisis.

The Eleventh Plenary Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International has expressed this fact in the following words:

> "The development of the class struggle amidst the further development of the world economic crisis confronts the broad masses of toilers with the ***decisive*** alternatives: either dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or—the dictatorship of the proletariat; either economic and political slavery or—to put an end to capitalist exploitation and oppression; either colonial oppression and imperialist war or—peace and fraternity between nations; either capitalist anarchy and crisis or—the Socialist system which eliminates anarchy and crisis."

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

To win the majority of the working class for the acceptance of the second alternative, that is, the overthrow of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is the chief strategic aim of the Communist Party. This aim follows from the deepening crisis, the sharpening capitalist offensive, and the growing revolutionary upsurge of the masses. This means to convince the masses, including such basic sections of the proletariat as the working women and youth, of the need of a revolutionary way out of the crisis and of winning them to follow the leadership of the Communist Party in organizing the proletarian counter-offensive.

In this connection, we must guard against a current opportunist conception that the capitalist system will collapse by itself, under the very pressure of its own difficulties. This opportunist conception arises from the wrong theory that the capitalist system is getting itself tangled up in a "hopeless" situation, from which there is no way out for the capitalist class. Lenin has proved the total falsity of such a conception, by showing that there is no such thing as a "hopeless" situation for capitalism; that the capitalist class, by attempting to shift the burden of the crisis over to the shoulders of the toiling masses, by undertaking to crush the revolutionary movements and by precipitating new imperialist wars, chiefly against the Soviet Union, may succeed in prolonging for a time its rule, thus magnifying infinitely the misery and agonies of the toiling masses and of humanity as a whole. Therefore, Lenin maintained, the only way in which we can make the situation for capitalism really hopeless is by defeating the efforts of the capitalist class to find a capitalist way out of the crisis, that is, by arousing the widest masses to organized resistance against the capitalist offensive, by developing in the daily struggles the proletarian counter-offensive, and by convincing the masses of the need of a revolutionary way out of the crisis.

One of the most powerful weapons in our hands for the winning of the majority of the working class to

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001932032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

struggle for the revolutionary way out of the crisis is the popularization of the Socialist achievements and victories of the Soviet Union. These Socialist achievements are making the Soviet Union ever more the center of attraction for the workers of all countries and for the oppressed of the whole world. The revolutionizing significance of the Soviet Union is growing. The Soviet Union is becoming strengthened as the base of world Socialism.

The first Five-Year Plan of Socialist construction will be accomplished in four years. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is already laying the basis for the launching of the second Five-Year Plan whose aims are of the greatest historical significance. The political aim of the second Five-Year Plan has been stated in the resolution of the Seventeenth Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the following words:

> "The Conference considers that the fundamental political task of the second Five-Year Plan is the final liquidation of capitalist elements and classes in general, the complete abolition of the causes that create class distinctions and exploitation, the overcoming of the remnants of capitalism in the economy and consciousness of the people, and the transformation of the entire toiling population of the country into conscious and active builders of a classless Socialist society."

Thus the second Five-Year Plan undertakes to erect a complete Socialist society—the first stage of Communism—on the Socialist foundation created by the first Five-Year Plan. These Socialist successes the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has achieved in the struggle against the bourgeois theory of Trotskyism regarding the impossibility of building up Socialism in one country and the inevitability of the restoration of capitalism—Trotskyism which has transformed itself now into the vanguard of the bourgeois counter-revolution. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

achieved these successes in the struggle against the right opportunism whose line consisted not only in tearing down the policy of the Socialist offensive, but also in direct capitulation before the kulak and bourgeois elements.

These Socialist successes of the Soviet Union, achieved under the leadership of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party, have undoubtedly had a great influence in bringing you into the ranks of the American Party. Now you must try to gain a clearer and more thorough understanding of the international role of Bolshevism and of the Bolshevik Party.

The enemies of the working class, especially the Trotskyite counter-revolutionists and other renegades from Communism, have lately undertaken to falsify and distort the world role of Lenin and of the Bolsheviks. The special purpose of these falsifications is to discourage the workers in the capitalist countries from accepting the Bolshevik revolution in Russia as the model proletarian revolution for the workers in all capitalist countries; to discourage the workers of the capitalist countries from accepting the Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Union as the model Communist Party; to discourage the workers of the capitalist countries from accepting and following the teachings of Lenin as the only guide of the world proletarian movement. This aim they try to achieve by misrepresenting Bolshevism as the product of a "backward country" whose theories and practices are not applicable to the more advanced capitalist countries. The letter of Comrade Stalin on this question which appeared recently in the Russian periodical, ***Proletarian Revolution,*** exposes this trick of the Trotskyite counter-revolutionists, branding as intolerable the "rotten liberalism" of some Party members who tolerate and permit such views in the Party.

The Communist Party of the United States holds the view that only in the measure in which we become a Bolshevik Party do we fulfill our tasks as a Communist Party. Each member of our Party can have no higher

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

aim and desire than to become a good Bolshevik in a good Bolshevik Party.

CHAPTER 2

Your Experiences with Bourgeois Democracy, the Capitalist Parties and Their Social Fascist Agents

The two main parties of the capitalist class of the United States are the Republican and the Democratic parties. While in the past there have been fundamental differences between these two parties, reflecting antagonistic interests within the ruling class, at the present time both the Republican and Democratic parties stand for the same thing. Moreover, both represent the interests of the dominating group in the capitalist class, the interests of big finance capital. This has been the case practically since the emergence of the era of imperialism, and is becoming more so every day. Your experiences with these parties—you may have been a member formerly of one of them, or have voted for either of them in the election campaign—will bear out the above statement. As a member of the Party, participating actively in the struggle against these capitalist parties along Communist lines, you will gain a better understanding of the role and relations of these two parties in the maintenance of the dictatorship of the capitalist class.

BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY, FASCISM AND SOCIAL-FASCISM

The so-called Democratic republic of the United States is a capitalist democracy which is a masked, camouflaged form of the dictatorship of the capitalist class. This is popularly expressed in the statement that the American government is a Wall Street government, a government of the trusts and the big bankers. This, however, does not mean that it is only Hoover and the Republican party that make the government subservient to Wall Street and to the big capitalists. It means that bourgois democracy, ***as a system and form of government,*** is and can be nothing else but a dictatorship of the capitalist class, camouflaged with various parliamenta-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

ry and other "democratic" trimmings, regardless of whether the government is held by the Republican, Democratic, "Socialist" or any other bourgeois or reformist political organization. The only form of government that is truly democratic, a government which belongs to the overwhelming majority of the population and is built and operated by all its toilers, is the ***Soviet form of government.*** This, too, is a dictatorship of a class (no government can be anything else), but it is a dictatorship of the ***working class,*** which rests upon the alliance between the working class and the toiling population of the farms (the small and exploited farmers), and functions for the sole purpose of suppressing capitalist counter-revolution; abolishing capitalist, landlord and imperialist exploitation; and building a Socialist society—the first stage of Communism—for the benefit of all toilers. It is an instrument not for the perpetuation of class rule, but for the abolition of class rule by the abolition of the class divisions that give rise to class rule—an instrument that will die away with the disappearance of class divisions and class struggle. The destruction of the capitalist state—the capitalist democracy—and the establishment of the proletarian state—the Soviet working class democracy—is the first condition to the next phase of the class struggle that leads to the abolition of all class divisions and class rule altogether. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the Socialist achievements of the Soviet Union offer the best confirmation of the truth of this fundamental idea of Marxism-Leninism.

The present form of government in the United States is a ***masked*** dictatorship of the capitalist class for the oppression and suppression of the workers and all the exploited. The deepening crisis, which intensifies all the fundamental contradictions of capitalism, the rising discontent of the masses and the growing prestige of the Soviet Union, give rise, on the one hand, to the ever more open utilization by the bourgeoisie of the apparatus of violence of its dictatorship, and, on the other hand, to the growth of the revolutionary upsurge among the

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

masses. This more open utilization of the apparatus of violence of the bourgeois dictatorship is occurring invariably every time that the masses enter into a struggle, or are preparing to struggle, for the improvement of their conditions, whether it be a strike, unemployment demonstration, a fight against lynching and Negro discrimination, anti-war demonstration, etc. The apparatus of violence and oppression of the bourgeois democracy (police, troops, machine guns, gas bombs, jails, courts, etc.) is used by the government more frequently and more openly to crush the masses and defend the exploiters. More often than before, the government is throwing aside some of the "democratic" camouflage, which is masking the existing capitalist dictatorship, showing itself more openly as the ***naked*** dictatorship of the capitalist class. Capitalist government and rule are becoming ***fascisized,*** that is, from a masked dictatorship of the capitalist class bourgeois democracy is developing into an open and naked dictatorship.

Thus we see that fascism—the ***naked*** form of the capitalist dictatorship—organically grows out of bourgeois democracy. Fascism sharpens all the methods of suppressing and enslaving the toiling masses—the methods that are peculiar to the capitalist system and inseparable from the whole system of bourgeois dictatorship. The bourgeoisie pushes forward and molds the fascist regime, interweaving it with the remnants of bourgeois democracy, seeking to destroy the class organizations of the workers, suppressing the Communist parties, creating and utilizing special military terroristic organizations (such as, the capitalist elements of the American Legion, the Ku Klux Klan, etc.), irrespective of whether the bourgeoisie abolishes or preserves the parliamentary forms of the bourgeois democracy. Hand in hand with this goes the growth of fascist social-demagogy, the playing with the needs and miseries of the toiling masses, in order to deceive them and to conceal the counter-revolutionary aims of the bourgeois dictatorship.

The recent growth of fascism has been possible only because of the support given to it by international social-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

democracy—the "socialist" parties, and reformist trade union leaders—throughout the whole post-war period of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, irrespective of the form that the latter has assumed. By drawing a contrast between the "democratic" forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (the masked form) and fascism (the naked form), social-democracy lulls the vigilance of the masses in the fight against the growing political reaction and fascism, conceals the counter-revolutionary character of bourgeois democracy and thus serves as an active factor and channel for the fascization of the capitalist state. This is how social-democracy and social-reformism generally have become ***social-fascism,*** which is represented in the United States by the leadership of the American Federation of Labor, by the Socialist party, by their "left" wing, Muste, and by Muste's assistants, the Lovestone and Cannon renegades.

What is the role of the capitalist parties and of their social-fascist agents in the maintenance of the dictatorship of the capitalist class?

You have undoubtedly observed that the Republican and Democratic parties, notwithstanding their apparent disagreements and "opposition" to each other, really belong into one and the same category. This category is the so-called two-party system of the capitalist class of the United States. Already in 1912 Lenin analyzed the meaning of this two-party system, showing that it is through both of these parties that the capitalist class rules the United States; that while one of them is in power, the function of the other is to prevent the crystalization of real opposition to capitalist rule by pretending with various demagogic tricks, to be "in opposition" to the party in power. This has been the strategy of American finance capital, that controls both the Republican and Democratic parties, which aimed to prevent the crystalization of any serious third parties, even a third party of the small bourgeoisie.

But the two-party system of American finance capital while continuing to fulfill the same purpose as in the

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

pre-war period, is undergoing certain changes in its structure in the direction of fascism. These changes consist in the policy of finance capital to incorporate into its party system the social fascists and the organizations controlled by them. The leadership of the American Federation of Labor is in fact an organic part of the capitalist party system. Not only are these leaders individually members of either one or the other of the capitalist parties, but their opposition to independent working class political action and their so-called non-partisan policy of supporting "friends" of labor on the tickets of the Republican and Democratic parties, is calculated to insure the domination of these two parties and to prevent the growth of a powerful working class political party.

The Socialist Party of America has also become an organic part of the capitalist party system. The social task which the Socialist party is carrying out for capitalism is to try to create within the working class a fortress of capitalism that would combat the development and growth of a real working class political party, resorting to the most extensive use of demagogy in order to deceive the masses. The praise which the capitalist class has been showering upon the Socialist party and its leaders in recent years shows conclusively that the American capitalists have accepted the Socialist party into the fold as a decent and respectable organization which deserves to be incorporated into the Party system of American capitalism.

This is how the capitalist class confronts the working class on the field of political struggle in which the daily economic struggles of the workers receive a more concentrated expression. It is class against class. The front of the capitalist class on the political field, which is embraced in the party system of capitalism, runs from the Republican and Democratic parties to the leadership of the American Federation of Labor and completes the chain of the system with the Socialist party. But this is not all. The "left" variety of social fascism is just as much a part of the capitalist front and of

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

the capitalist party system as the rest of social fascism, only it fulfills a special task with special means.

"LEFT" SOCIAL FASCISM AND THE RENEGADES FROM COMMUNISM

The special social task that the "left" social fascists fulfill for capitalism is to deceive and demoralize the radicalized sections of the working class, those that are on the road to Communism and to the Communist Party. Muste and the Musteites, and the groups that are related to them in the American Federation of Labor and in the Socialist party, step forward with their "left" demagogy precisely among those workers who no longer have confidence in the Greens, Matthew Wolls, and the Hillquits. The chief stock in trade of these "left" social fascists is to pay lip service to various left policies, even accepting the dictatorship of the proletariat (with reservations), and having done this to secure a sympathetic hearing from the radicalized workers, the "left" demagogs proceed to denounce and attack the Communist Party and the revolutionary unions of the Trade Union Unity League. Thus Muste and Company expose themselves as social fascists who are playing the "left" in order to be able more easily to approach the radicalized worker for the purpose of preventing his joining the class struggle under revolutionary leadership. The talk of Muste and Company of independent political action by the workers and of a Labor Party is dictated by the same considerations of providing a reformist political outlet for those workers who have become disillusioned with the Socialist party, thus halting the progress of these workers to the party of the working class —the Communist Party.

The right wing renegades from Communism (Lovestone and Company) and the Trotskyite counter-revolutionists (Cannon and Company) are in reality the helpers and assistants of Muste and Company, that is, a bridge to Green, Woll, Hillquit and Company. The renegades operate chiefly among the more advanced workers that are already grouping themselves around the

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001932032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Communist Party. But the purpose of the renegades is the same as that of Muste and Company, to demoralize the fighting front of the workers (see the treacherous role of the renegades in the recent strikes of the miners, textile workers and needle trades), to wage war against the Communist Party while pretending to be in sympathy with its revolutionary program. In this way the renegades, the same as Muste, become incorporated into the front of capitalism against the front of the working class. They become also a part of the party system of American capitalism. As against this capitalist front the Communist Party is building up a working class front aiming to win for this working class united front the support of all the toiling and oppressed masses in the United States.

From the above it will become clear why the merciless fight against social fascism, especially the exposure and struggle against the "left" social fascists and their renegade assistants, is a basic part of the struggle for the building up of the anti-capitalist proletarian front under the leadership of the Communist Party.

In carrying out the struggle against the various shadings of social fascism, we must guard against two dangers. One is, the danger of adopting a tolerant and easy going attitude towards social fascism. This is the greatest danger confronting us because without destroying the influence of social fascism among the masses we will not be able to destroy the rule of capitalism. At the same time we must guard against another danger, the danger of considering the rank and file working class members of the organizations controlled by the social fascists as being all of them hopeless social fascists themselves with whom it would be useless to talk and try to win over to our side. This is also a great danger which plays into the hands directly of social fascism. While attacking mercilessly the hypocrisy, demagogy and betrayals of the social fascist leaders we must patiently and in a comradely way persuade and convince the working class followers of the social fascists—especially in the unions of the American Federation of Labor

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

of the correctness of our position, on the basis of common united front struggles, especially in the shops, against the capitalist offensive.

CHAPTER 3

Initiative—Activity—Discipline

What is the nature of membership in the Communist Party? This is well stated in the Constitution and Rules of the Communist International, Paragraph 3, which reads as follows:

> "Membership in the Communist Party and in the Communist International is open to all those who accept the program and rules of the given Communist Party and of the Communist International, who join one of the basic units of a Party, actively work in it, abide by all the decisions of the Party and of the Communist International, and regularly pay Party dues."

You will observe that all of the specific requirements for membership in the Party aim at one thing, namely, the active, conscious and disciplined participation in the struggles of the masses that are led and organized by the Party. There can be nothing formal, or blind, or passive about membership in the Party, because the Communist Party is the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. Initiative on the part of every member, creative activity for winning and organizing the masses, and discipline in the carrying out of the decisions of the Party and of the Communist International are the very essence of Communist Party membership.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF BOLSHEVISM

Each Party member must avail himself or herself of the opportunity provided by the Party for a thorough study of the organizational principles of Bolshevism which are the organizational principles of the Commu-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

nist International and of our Party. Without it one cannot become a good and active Party member.

To realize how important the organizational principles of our Party are, it would suffice perhaps to mention the fact that one of the most important fights that Bolshevism had made against opportunism, in Russia itself and in the whole pre-war Second International, was on the question of organization. This was the famous struggle of Lenin and the Bolsheviks at the Second Congress of the Russian Party on the question of Party organization, Lenin and the Bolsheviks fighting for the principle of a centralized, active, disciplined proletarian party and the opportunists (the future Mensheviks) fighting for a decentralized, loose, non-disciplined, petty bourgeois organization. It was this question, together with the question of the role of the working class in the revolution and the role of the Party as its leader that precipitated and crystallized the division between the opportunists and proletarian revolutionists, between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks.

The organizational principles of Bolshevism follow inevitably from the Bolshevik conception of the role of the Communist Party. What is this conception? Stalin states that in the following words:

> "The Party should be the vanguard of the working class. It should group within it the best elements, should embody their experiences, their revolutionary spirit, their unbounded devotion to the cause of the proletariat.... The Party is the political leader of the working class."

Stalin compares the Party to the general staff of an army. The Party is the general staff of the working class revolutionary army, leading the war against capitalism. As such the Party must be built as a centralized organization, each member belonging to a Party unit and carrying on daily active work among the masses under the direction of this unit, and fulfilling faithfully, consciously and loyally the Party policies and Party decisions.

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The Bolshevik principles of organization are unalterably opposed to all theories of spontaneity, that is, the "theories" that the working class can achieve its liberation from capitalism without the leadership of the Communist Party. The theories of spontaneity are the theories of opportunism. They deny to the Party of the working class the leading role of the vanguard. Stalin brands this theory as the "underestimation of the role of the conscious elements in the movement, the ideology of the 'rearguard,' the logical base of *all* opportunism." No wonder that this theory of spontaneity is part of the philosophy of Trotskyism. This "theory" was also held by the left radicals in the Second International before the war, including Rosa Luxemburg, and the struggle of the Bolsheviks for their principles of organization was therefore directed also against the Luxemburg conception of spontaneity.

An essential part of the Bolshevik principles of organization is the principle of democratic centralism. The constitution and rules of the Communist International formulate this as follows:

> "The Communist International and its Sections are built upon the basis of democratic centralism, the fundamental principles of which are: (a) election of all the leading committees of the Party, subordinate and superior (by general meetings of Party members, conferences, congresses and international congresses); (b) periodical reports by leading Party committees to their constituents; (c) decisions of superior Party committees to be obligatory for subordinate committees, strict Party discipline and prompt execution of the decisions of the Communist International, of its leading committees and of the leading Party centers.
>
> "Party questions may be discussed by the members of the Party and by the Party organizations until such time as a decision is taken upon them by the competent Party committees. After a decision has been taken by the Congress of the Communist International, by the Congress of the respective Sections, or by leading committees of the Comin-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

tern, and of its various Sections, these decisions must be unreservedly carried out even if a section of the Party membership or of the local Party organizations are in disagreement with it.

"In cases where a Party exists illegally, the superior Party committees may appoint the subordinate committees and co-opt members on their own committees, subject to subsequent endorsement by the competent superior Party committees."

It is on the basis of these principles that our Party is organized, beginning with the nucleus, which is the basic Party unit and completing the structure with the Central Committee which is the highest governing body of the Party in the period between Party conventions. The Party press is an organic part of the Party's structure and one of its most important weapons for winning and organizing the masses. The Party is continually striving to better and strengthen its organization, to adapt its work to the tasks of the class struggle at any given period. This we achieve in the measure in which we can fight successfully, on the one hand against the right opportunist tendency to loosen up and to weaken the discipline of our organization, and, on the other hand, against the "left" sectarian tendency which creates a caricature of Communist Party discipline by its mechanical approach to the question. At all times the Party wages a merciless struggle against all bureaucratic and formalistic tendencies in our midst which are incompatible with Bolshevik organization and discipline.

It is obvious that in a Communist Party there can be no room for factional divisions and groupings. The experience of our own Party with factional groupings and factional struggles, a condition that prevailed in our Party for many years until broken and liquidated with the help of the Communist International in 1929, offers conclusive proof that factional groupings and factional divisions constitute the greatest danger to the Communist Party, an obstacle to its growth as well as to its successful struggles against the opportunist deviations from the line of the Communist International.

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

THE QUALITY OF COMMUNIST WORK IN THE PRESENT PERIOD

The quality of Communist work in the present period must be different from the quality of Communist work in the previous periods. In a word, this could be expressed as follows: From propagandists we must become organizers and leaders of the daily struggles of the masses. This does not mean that we should cease propagating the ideas and principles of Communism. Not at all. What it does mean is that we must now carry on the propaganda of Communism by means and in the process of organizing and leading the daily struggles of the masses against the capitalist offensive, winning the masses for Communism on the basis of their practical experiences in the struggle under our leadership.

This change in the quality of our work, of the work of each individual Party member as well as of the Party as a whole, is dictated to us by the basic characteristics of the present period in the development of post-war capitalism. For an understanding of the characteristics of the present period, it is most essential to study the deliberations and decisions of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, which laid bare the inevitability of the shattering of the temporary and decaying capitalist stabilization and the inevitable rise of great battles against capitalism for which the Communist Parties in all imperialist and colonial countries must prepare themselves with the greatest rapidity.

The 11th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International has given us an analysis of the latest phase of the development of the present period of post-war capitalism. The Plenum had found that the temporary and decaying capitalist stabilization was coming to an end; while in the Soviet Union, the laying of the foundations of a socialist economy was being completed. On the basis of these facts the Plenum has analyzed the development of the crisis, the capitalist offensive and the sharpening contrast and antagonism between the capitalist world and the world that is building socialism showing the prevalence and

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001932032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

inevitable growth of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses in all the imperialist and colonial countries, the ripening of the pre-conditions for a revolutionary crisis in such countries as Germany and Poland and the further deepening of the revolutionary crisis in China, India, and Spain. At the same time the Plenum took note of the fact that the Communist Parties were still lagging behind this rising revolutionary upsurge of the masses, therefore making it mandatory upon all our parties to increase many fold the tempo of their work, to improve the quality of their work in order to overcome this dangerous lagging behind, thus enabling our parties to function as the true vanguard of the working class.

What does this mean for the improvement of the quality of our work? It means more and better Communist work among the masses for the organization and leadership of their daily struggles. It means to carry on the most concentrated activities among the masses, especially among the workers in the shops, for the organization of their economic struggles against the employers, drawing in the working women and youth, building up in the process of these struggles shop committees, revolutionary unions and revolutionary oppositions in unions of the American Federation of Labor. It means the most intensive activities for the organization of the unemployed masses to struggle for unemployment relief and insurance, building up in the process wide organizations of the unemployed. It means further the most intense development of our anti-war campaign which at the present time must be placed in the center of all our activities, the campaign against the imperialist war on China and for the defense of the Soviet Union. In a word it means the most energetic and systematic activities for the unfolding of the daily struggles of the masses against the capitalist offensive along the lines of the Party's policies, at all times recruiting into the Party the more advanced proletarian elements and building the Party organization in the shops.

To accomplish this end, that is, to raise our work to the necessary heights of quality, we must combat sys-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

tematically two varieties of opportunism that are still present in our midst. One is the right opportunist tendency which expresses itself in sheer passivity, in hesitation to step forward as the leader and organizer of the daily struggles of the masses, in the pernicious tendency of white chauvinism and in a lack of faith in the revolutionary upsurge that is taking place. This is our main danger in the present period. At the same time we must combat another opportunist tendency, which usually covers itself with "left" phrases. This tendency expresses itself in the attitude of narrow sectarianism which isolates itself from the masses, adopts a false "superior" attitude to the masses. The effect of this is the abandonment of the field of struggle, the opportunist giving up of the fight.

Joining the Communist Party does under no circumstances mean the going away from the masses, but on the contrary, it means for each individual Communist the establishment of even closer and more intimate connections with the masses, especially with his or her shopmates as well as with the co-members of the unions, working class friends in the neighborhoods, etc. A Communist proves to the masses his or her superior value to the working class, not by assuming a "superior" sectarian pose but by demonstrating concretely in the daily struggle against the exploiters that he or she are more militant, better fighters, better organizers of the workers, deserving to be leaders and able to win the recognition of the masses as their leaders in the struggle against the capitalist offensive.

CONCENTRATION ON SHOP WORK—THE SHOP NUCLEUS

These qualities of Communist work, a Party member must display on all fields of activity, but most especially in the shop where he or she works. The shop must become the center of our activities. This is the essence of the decisions of the 13th Plenum of the Central Committee of our Party. This is the main link in the chain of struggle which we must now seize will all our might in order to get hold of the entire chain for the making of the next step in the development of our Party. That

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

is why we must build the Party organization—the Party nuclei—first of all and primarily in the shops. That is why we must build our revolutionary unions and the revolutionary oppositions of the A. F. of L. unions first of all in the shops. Our slogan is: ***Every shop must become a fortress of Communism, and every member of the Party an organizer and leader of the daily struggles of the masses.***

Without minimizing in the least the tremendous importance of organizing the unemployed masses, our greatest attention must be given to winning and organizing the workers in the largest shops of the most important industries. Only in this way will we be able to develop the full striking force of the proletarian counter-offensive uniting the struggles of the employed with the unemployed workers. Concentration on the shops, especially of the chemical and other munitions-producing industries (which includes the basic industries) as well as transport, is dictated to us also by the needs of the anti-war struggle which must be placed ***in the center of the Party's activities.***

The Party's main policy for winning the workers in the shops is to take the initiative for the organization of the daily struggles of the workers against the employers. On the basis of these struggles, and in the course of their preparation, the party unit (nucleus) in the shop must aim to organize all workers, regardless of their trade union or political affiliations, drawing in the working women and youth by developing also their special demands, into a shop committee, or grievance committee which, with the maturing of strike struggles, can become transformed into a strike preparation or strike committee, thus laying the basis for trade union organization in the shop and for winning the broad masses of the workers for the revolutionary unions of the T.U.U.L. and for the revolutionary oppositions in the unions of the A.F. of L. In the course of these struggles and activities, the party members in the shops must systematically recruit the more advanced elements into the Party organizing Party shop nuclei where none exist. In this way the Party is enabled to

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

mobilize for the various campaigns ever larger numbers of the most strategic sections of the American proletariat, raising its daily struggles to higher political levels and building the counter-offensive of the working class. In all of these activities we must fully utilize the Party press as the agitator and organizer of the masses by distributing and selling systematically the Party organs, especially the Daily Worker, which is the Party's central organ, and other Party publications, most particularly among our shopmates and among the workers generally.

CHAPTER 4

Become a Conscious Leninist

To become a good Communist, that is a competent organizer and leader of the masses against capitalism, one must strive to learn and digest the theory and practice of Leninism. The teachings of Lenin offer the only guide to revolutionary action in the present epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. Here is how Stalin defines Leninism:

> "Leninism is the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution, it is the theory and tactic of the revolution in general, and particularly the theory and tactic of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx and Engels lived in a pre-revolutionary epoch when imperialism was still in an embryonic condition, when the proletarians were only preparing themselves for the revolution, when the proletarian revolution was not yet a direct practical necessity. Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, has lived in an epoch of expansion of imperialism and development of the proletarian revolution, in an epoch when this revolution, triumphant in one country, destroyed the bourgeois democracy there and opened the era of proletarian democracy, the era of Soviets. That is why Leninism is the development of Marxism."

From the above it can be seen how slanderous are the

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

assertions of the Trotskyite counter-revolutionists and the other renegades that are trying to "prove" that Leninism is purely a Russian phenomenon, that the teachings of Lenin are not applicable to other countries. Even in our own midst we can find hidden Trotskyites who are trying to insinuate in a covered manner this same counter-revolutionary idea. It was against this smuggling of Trotskyism into our literature, into the history of the Bolshevik Party, that Comrade Stalin came forth so sharply, like our true Bolshevik leader, in his now famous letter to the Russian Party periodical ***Proletarian Revolution.*** Leninism is not merely a Russian phenomenon but an international one. It is the philosophy and guide of the revolutionary movement against capitalism and imperialism in all the imperialist and colonial countries. That is why we must all strive to master the theory and practice of Leninism.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

One of the most important sides of Leninism is its conception of the relation between theory and practice. This relation we must understand in order to guard against many dangers. Any separation of revolutionary theory from revolutionary practice and, vise versa, revolutionary practice from revolutionary theory, inevitably leads to the swamp of opportunism.

We must be on our guard against every underestimation of the importance of revolutionary theory. Especially so in the United States where the influence of the capitalist class ideology upon the working class tends to create within it a contempt for revolutionary theory. To fall for this is to fall in the trap laid for us by our class enemies. At the same time we must guard against a purely bookish, abstract, academic and scholastic conception of revolutionary theory. This, too, is a reflection of bourgeois ideology upon the working class.

The true relation between revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice as developed by Lenin, is stated by Comrade Stalin in the following words:

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

"The theory is the synthesis of the experience of the labor movement of all countries in its general aspect. It loses its ***raison d'etre*** if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice wanders off into darkness if it does not light its way with the revolutionary theory. But the theory becomes the greatest force in the labor movement if it is indissolubly bound up with revolutionary practice, for it alone can give to the movement confidence, guidance, understanding of the inner relations between events, it alone can help to make clear the process and direction of class movements in the present and near future. Lenin himself has many times said that ***'without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement.' (What Is To Be Done?)*** Hhe understood better than anyone else the extreme importance of theory, particularly for a Party like our on which descended the role of vanguard of the international proletariat and which had to work in a most complicated internal and international situation. Foreseeing this special role of our Party, he thought it necessary, even in 1902, to recall that ***'only a Party guided by a vanguard theory can fill the role of vanguard fighter.'***"

PRACTICAL MASS WORK AND THE STUDY OF LENINIST THEORY

In actual practice there arises a certain conflict between the needs and requirements of a Party member's mass activities and his needs for theoretical study. It actually takes the form of the attitude that "there is no time for study." This is true, if at all, only in a very limited sense. Time is no doubt a very important element for a Party member who is carrying out conscientiously his or her Party tasks and duties. The thing that must be emphasized in this connection is that theoretical Leninist education is also a Party task and duty for each individual Party member. Once this idea is thoroughly assimilated the problem resolves itself into one of how best to co-ordinate and organize

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

the carrying out of all the important tasks—practical work and theoretical study.

It is very seldom that a Party member can get the opportunity to devote most of the time to theoretical study. As the Party's facilities for the theoretical education of its membership increases, larger numbers will be getting the chance of benefiting by the various full-time training courses in Party schools, Workers School, etc. But even those will not be relieved of the need of continuing systematically and always to enrich their theoretical equipment. This means the carrying on of theoretical studies hand in hand with practical mass work and in the closest possible contact with it. For most of the Party members this is for the present the only way in which to combine the practical and theoretical work. An indispensable requirement for this work is the systematic utilization of the Party's theoretical organ, ***The Communist,*** and of the organ of the E.C. C.I., the ***Communist International.***

CHAPTER 5

We are Members of a World Party

Our Party is the United States Section of the Communist International which is a world Communist Party and each one of us is therefore a member of a world Party. In this lies the greatest hope and promise of success for the world's proletarian revolution and all oppressed and exploited in their struggle against capitalism.

The following constitutes Paragraph 1 of the Constitution and Rules of the Communist International, which gives the character and aims of our World Party:

> "The Communist International—the International Workers' Association—is a union of Communist Parties in various countries; it is a World Communist Party. As the leader and organizer of the world revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the upholder of the principles and aims of

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:59 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Communism, the Communist International strives to win over the majority of the working class and the broad strata of the propertyless peasantry, fights for the establishment of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, for the establishment of a World Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, for the complete abolition of classes and for the achievement of Socialism—the first stage of Communist society."

The main line of the structure of the Communist International is as follows: The Communist International is made up of various Communist Parties in individual countries, or national sections. The supreme governing body of the Communist International is the World Congress consisting of representatives of all the Sections. The World Congress elects the Executive Committee of the Communist International (E.C.C.I.) and the International Control Commission (I.C.C.). The decisions of the E.C.C.I. are obligatory for all the Sections of the Communist International and must be promptly carried out. The Sections have the right to appeal against decisions of the E.C.C.I. to the World Congress, but must continue to carry out such decisions pending the decision of the World Congress.

International discipline is of course a basic principle in the organization of the Communist International. Without it no working class revolutionary International is possible. It is noteworthy that every opportunist tendency that arises in our midst seeks to attack, first of all, the discipline of the Communist International, because in this way, the revolutionary Leninist policy of the Communist International would be weakened and opportunism would meet with less resistance. This can be seen very clearly in the attacks of the Trotskyite opposition and of the right wing renegades, prior to their expulsion from the Communist International, upon the discipline of our World Party, and their advocacy of the right to organize fractions and groups within the Communist International and its various sections. But our World Communist movement always

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

presented an iron front against any such weakening of international discipline, fighting for the Leninist principle that the Communist Party is a monolithic and homogenious body of revolutionary workers functioning as the vanguard of the working class.

The experience of our own Party in the fight for maintaining the discipline of our World organization (the fight against Lovestoneism and Cannon-Trotskyism) demonstrates that the attack upon the world discipline of our movement is always the attempt of opportunists to make the first opening through which they would bring in a whole opportunist ideology and program. This was well illustrated by the "theory" of American exceptionalism, developed by the Lovestone and Cannon renegades—a theory which sought to break down the world discipline of the Communist International in order to transform the American Communist movement into an opportunist movement. Under the leadership of the Executive Committee of the Communist International our Party has defeated these efforts of the opportunists and is continuing to build itself as a loyal and disciplined member of the World Communist Party.

Proletarian internationalism constitutes the very heart of our World Party. It is also on this point that the Second, the social fascist International exposes itself as the main social support of the imperialists. The individual parties of the Second International are each of them standing in the service of their "own" bourgeoisie, and all of them taken together are standing in the service of world capitalism. The "internationalism" of the Second International is of the same character as that of the capitalist class. The only "principle" of internationalism that unites them is their opposition to the Soviet Union, their constant plotting for intervention against the Soviet Union, and their undying hatred of the revolutionary movement of the working class and of the oppressed colonial peoples. In everything else they are narrow chauvinistic, and nationalistic in accord with the dictates of the imperialist policies of their respective national bourgeoisie.

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

In the preface to the program of our World Party, which was adopted at the 6th World Congress of the Communist International, it is stated:

"Expressing the historical need for an international organization of revolutionary proletarians—the grave-diggers of the capitalist order—the Communist International is the only International force that has for its programme the dictatorship of the proletariat and Communism, and that openly comes out as the ***organizer of the international proletarian revolution.***"

CHAPTER 6

The Chief Strategic Aim of Our Party

FIGHTING TO WIN THE MAJORITY OF THE WORKING CLASS

The chief strategic aim of our Party in the present period is to win the majority of the working class for the struggle against capitalism under our leadership. This has been stated by the 11th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in the following words:

"The ***principal*** task that now confronts all the Communist Parties is to win the majority of the working class as an essential condition for victory over the bourgeoisie and for preparing the working class for the decisive battles ***for the dictatorship of the proletariat.*** The successful fulfilment of this principal task is closely linked up with the consolidation of the independent revolutionary trade union movement, with the transformation, in the process of mass proletarian movements, of the revolutionary trade union oppositions and of the independent revolutionary trade unions, into genuinely mass organizations capable indeed of preparing for and leading the economic battles of the proletariat, and of becoming the principal transmission belts between the Communist Parties and the broad masses of the workers."

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

In the above excerpts from the 11th Plenum Resolution, we find all the elements of our specific tasks which we must carry out in order to accomplish our main strategic aim. We need to emphasize especially the task of consolidating the independent revolutionary trade unions, that is, the unions of the Trade Union Unity League, and their transformation into true mass proletarian unions. Hand in hand with this must go the building up of the revolutionary trade union opposition in the reformist unions, that is, chiefly in the unions of the American Federation of Labor. While there is still existing in our midst a serious underestimation of the importance of building up the unions of the Trade Union Unity League — which underestimation is the chief danger in the present period— at the same time we are also suffering from a grave underestimation of the needs of building up the revolutionary oppositions in the unions of the American Federation of Labor. This underestimation usually hides itself behind "left" phrases, such as "there is no need to bother with reactionary unions," or that "the members of the A.F. of L. unions are labor aristocrats." But this attitude is just as opportunistic and contrary to the interests of our movement as is the underestimation of the building up of the independent revolutionary unions. Both must be combatted with the utmost energy in order to carry on a successful fight against the social fascist leaders, the betrayers of the workers and for the winning of the majority of the working class.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSMISSION BELTS

The above excerpts from the 11th Plenum resolution speak of the independent revolutionary trade unions and of the revolutionary trade union oppositions as "the principal transmission belts between the Communist Parties and the broad masses of the workers." It is of the greatest importance to have a clear realization of the role of these transmission belts for the victory of the proletarian revolution as well as for the building up of a socialist society after the capture of power by the proletariat.

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

In discussing this question we are raising the very important question of the relations between the Party and the working class. The Communist Party is the class party of the proletariat. It is part and parcel of the working class, embracing in its ranks the most advanced, militant, and conscious elements. This means that only a part of the working class, its best, most creative and self-sacrificing elements are coming into the Party. This raises the question of the relation between the Party and the class, the Party and the non-Party masses. In brief, this relation can be stated as follows: The Party represents the class interests of the entire class. It strives to maintain the most intimate and living contact with the masses. Such intimate and living contact between the Party and the class, which is a pre-condition for the success of the revolution, can be best established and maintained through the building up of wide, formally non-Party mass organizations that would embrace the widest masses of the working class, guided by the Party through the Communist fractions within these organizations. Such organizations are the trade unions into which the widest masses of workers find it necessary to come in for the defense of their most elementary interests. While we are building independent revolutionary unions under the Trade Union Unity League, we must keep in mind the fact that there are still large numbers of workers within the unions of the American Federation of Labor. Therefore, our task on the trade union field, the task of building up on that field of struggle the necessary transmission belts between the Party and the masses, has two sides to it: The building of the independent revolutionary unions and the building up of the revolutionary oppositions in the reformist unions. These are two sides of one task which we must carry in order to fight successfully for the winning of the majority of the working class. The organization of Communist fractions in the unions, revolutionary and reformist, is one of the most important phases of this work.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL FASCISM

The task of building up these transmission belts be-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

tween the Party and the masses must be considered also from the angle of our struggle against social fascism. In previous chapters we have discussed the role of social fascism as the chief social support of imperialism and have shown how the defeat of social fascist influence among the masses is a prerequisite for the successful struggle against capitalism. Here we can see that the building up of Communist fractions and mass revolutionary oppositions in the unions of the A. F. of L. offers one of the most important weapons for the successful struggle against social fascism.

Of course, one must have a clear understanding of the role and tasks of revolutionary oppositions in reformist unions. Their task is not to live in peace with the social fascist leaders of these unions but on the contrary, to wage a systematic fight against them, to expose their demagogy and maneuvers, to combat their betrayals of the workers, and to wrest the masses away from the leadership of the social fascists. And the most important means for accomplishing this end is for the revolutionary oppositions led by the Communist fractions to undertake the independent leadership of the economic struggles of the workers regardless of and against the treacherous social fascist leadership. It is only in the measure in which the revolutionary trade union opposition in the reformist unions undertake to lead independently the daily economic struggles of the workers against the wishes of the social fascist leaders, concentrating their work in the shops and factories, that we will succeed in breaking the influence of the social fascist leadership and winning the masses for the revolutionary leadership.

In speaking of the importance of transmission belts between the Party and the masses, we must remember that besides the unions there are other non-Party mass organizations, already existing and others that we undertake to organize in the course of the developing counter-offensive of the proletariat. We should refer here to such non-Party mass organizations as the International Labor Defense, the Workers International Relief, various organizations in the struggle for Negro rights,

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

etc. Of course some of these organizations are as yet far from being mass organizations. Our task therefore consists in widening them, broadening them out, and transforming them into real mass movements. Also in the course of developing the proletarian counter-offensive we are resorting to the building up of various non-Party mass organs on a united front basis, as for instance, the building up of the Unemployed Committees and Councils, Anti-War Committees, etc. Here the important thing to remember is that the Party must build up and develop transmission belts between itself and the class following the tactic of the united front from below with the widest masses of workers on the basis of a common struggle for their daily and most burning needs. All Communists in such organizations must organize themselves into a Party fraction working under the direction of the respective leading committees of the Party.

FOR A MASS COMMUNIST PARTY

The transformation of our Party into a mass Party of the proletariat, in the shortest possible time, is one of our main tasks. In fact, this is ***the*** main task because to accomplish it, the Party must carry on a successful struggle for the winning of the majority of the working class. This means the widest activities for the organization of the daily fight of the masses against the capitalist offensive and for the development of the proletarian counter-offensive. This means the building up of powerful transmission belts between the Party and the class, especially the building up of the revolutionary unions and revolutionary oppositions in the reformist unions and the organizations of the unemployed, always remembering that the working women and youth constitute one of the most important parts of the proletariat. In other words, the Party can build itself into a mass Party only by building up the fighting power of the proletariat and its non-Party mass organizations. Consequently, the task of transforming our Party in the shortest possible time into a mass Communist Party includes all the other tasks and in this

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

sense it is *the* most important and all-inclusive task of our Party.

The 13th Plenum of the Central Committee of our Party has formulated the concrete measures which we must take in order to fight effectively for the transformation of our Party into a mass Communist Party. Concretizing the decisions of the 11th Plenum of the E. C. C. I. and applying them to the specific conditions in the United States, the Plenum of our Central Committee issued a number of slogans with which to mobilize the Party and the workers for the development of the proletarian counter-offensive. Chief of these slogans is the slogan of "Face to the Shops." In accordance with the general line of the Communist International for the present period, our Central Committee undertook to direct the attention of the Party and the workers that follow the Party's leadership to the vital importance of building up the strength of the revolutionary workers *in the shops and factories.* This is where the power of the working class counts most. This is the place where the Party and the revolutionary unions, as well as the revolutionary oppositions in the reformist unions must root themselves in order to be able to promote effectively the organization of the proletarian counter-offensive. Consequently, the task of transforming our Party into the mass Party of the American proletariat must be carried out primarily by building our strength in the shops and factories without weakening in any way our work among the unemployed.

The fulfilment of this task also involves the giving of systematic assistance and guidance to the Young Communist League, the Party's assistant in the fight for Socialism, and the building up of the Y. C. L. into a mass organization of the American working class and toiling youth. Every Party unit, and every Party member must help the Y. C. L. carry out this basic task.

CHAPTER 7

The Main Lines of Struggle

The 11th Plenum of the E. C. C. I. has formulated the

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

following main lines along which we must conduct the struggle to win the majority of the working class.

THREE LINES OF STRUGGLE

1. The fight against the capitalist offensive and the organization of a broad counter-offensive of the proletariat. This includes chiefly the fight against wage cuts, for wage increases, against lay offs, for the 7-hour day without reduction in pay, for social insurance at the expense of the employers and the state, for unemployment insurance, for immediate relief to the unemployed, etc.

2. The fight against the bourgeois dictatorship in all its forms. This includes the struggle against the terror of the bosses and police, for the freedom of revolutionary workers' organizations, free press, free speech, the right of assembly, for the immediate dissolution of all fascist organizations and armed company bands, for disarming the latter, and the arming of the workers against fascist attacks, against imperialist terror in the colonies, the propaganda and organizational preparation and the carrying through of mass political strikes as a means of struggle of the working class against the political reaction of the bourgeois dictatorship in all its forms, the organization of mass self-defense corps on a factory basis, etc.

3. The fight against the imperialist war and military intervention against the Soviet Union. This includes the exposure of the preparations for military intervention by the imperialist governments, the fight against the imperialist robber war on China, for the defense of China, the Chinese Revolution and the Soviet Union.

WINNING THE MASSES OF EXPLOITED FARMERS

For the purpose of winning the masses of small and exploited farmers, and of strengthening the leading role of the proletariat in the agricultural districts, our Party must render all possible support to the struggles of these masses against their exploiters. Our Party must lead and organize the struggle of the toiling farmers against the burden of taxation, against forced labor (especially in the South), for the reduction of rent and

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

abolition of indebtedness, linking up these movements with the struggle against the landlords, for the confiscation of the large landlord estates without compensation, against the rule of the capitalist class—for a Soviet government.

THE ANTI-WAR STRUGGLE MUST BE PLACED IN THE CENTER OF THE PARTY'S ACTIVITY

The fight against the imperialist robber war on China and for the defense of the Chinese Revolution and of the Soviet Union constitutes at the present time ***the center of the Party's activity.*** The Japanese offensive in China, the seizure of Manchuria and the penetration of the Japanese forces into Central China, create the immediate danger of imperialist war against the Soviet Union, at the same time sharpening all the imperialist antagonisms and increasing manyfold the danger of a new imperialist world war, which is becoming one of the most important roads by which world imperialism is seeking a capitalist way out of the crisis. This is the greatest danger confronting the world's proletariat and the oppressed toiling masses at the present time. Consequently the struggle against the imperialist war on China, against the partition of China and for the defense of the Chinese Revolution and of the Soviet Union is the central task of the Party, with which the other main lines of struggle must be intimately linked up.

The 11th Plenum of the E. C. C. I. has made it the duty of ***every individual Communist*** to expose the social-fascists as agents of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the preparations for military intervention against the Soviet Union, to expose their false pacifism as an organic and integral part of these war preparations, and to win the masses away from the social-fascists for the anti-war struggles under the leadership of the Communist Party.

DEVELOPING THE DAILY STRUGGLES OF THE WORKERS

There exists a grave underestimation of the importance of organizing and leading the daily struggles of the workers for their "small" grievances and immediate de-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

mands. Some comrades think that the attitude of minimizing the importance of such struggles is a sign of being a good proletarian revolutionist. Nothing is further from the truth. Behind this unwillingness and hesitation to organize the daily fight of the workers, especially in the shops and factories, for the rectification of their grievances and for their economic demands, there usually lurks either plain right opportunist passivity, if not cowardice, or a narrow sectarian conception of the tasks of the Communist Party, which conception is also opportunist although it covers itself with "left" phrases.

The truth is that the organization and leadership of these daily struggles of the workers, even for their smallest demands, is one of the most important tasks of the Communists and the Communist Party. It is only through the fulfilment of this task that we will be able to develop the proletarian counter-offensive. building up in the process the revolutionary unions and the other transmission belts, transforming our Party into a mass Party and winning the majority of the working class. This task of developing the daily struggles of the workers is the very essence of the united front policy from below and this policy is the most powerful weapon in our hands for the fulfilment of the main aims of our movement in the present period. The 11th Plenum of the Communist International concludes its general political resolution with the following words:

> "Only by conducting persistent systematic and everyday struggle, only by really fighting for the everyday interests of the workers and utilizing even the slightest signs of protest of the masses of the workers, against exploitation and fascist reaction, will the Communist Parties, be able to achieve the broad united front from below, defeat social democracy, create mass revolutionary trade unions, or revolutionary trade union oppositions, win the majority of the working class and lead the working class to the decisive battle for the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

CHAPTER 8

The Struggle Against Deviations from the Leninist Line

BOLSHEVIK INTOLERANCE TO OPPORTUNISM AND OPPORTUNIST DEVIATIONS

Bolshevism is highly intolerant towards opportunism and opportunist deviations because opportunism in the labor movement constitutes the influence of the capitalist ideology upon the working class. To be tolerant to opportunism means to be tolerant to capitalist ideology which is the same thing as toleration of the capitalist dictatorship and the abandonment of the struggle against it. It is an established historic fact that Bolshevism became what it is, the guide of the world revolutionary movement and the builder of Socialism in the Soviet Union, because of the merciless and highly intolerant struggle against opportunism — right and "left"—of all shades and varieties. Stalin puts it this way:

> "Leninism arose, grew, and became strong in a relentless struggle against opportunism of every shade, including centrism in the west (Kautsky) and centrism among us (Trotsky and others)."

It is noteworthy that one of the commonest forms of opportunist attacks upon Communism is the attack upon its so-called "narrowness," "dogmatism," "inflexibility." By this the opportunists mean the Bolshevik intolerance of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology since nothing is more alien to Leninism than sectarian narrowness and dogmatism. Leninism possesses all the width and flexibility that the Communist vanguard requires for the winning of the masses to struggle against the capitalist dictatorship and for the establishment and victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And because of this fact, Leninism also has all the iron inflexibility and intolerance towards the carriers of bourgeois ideology into the working class. This ideology Leninism considers deadly for the development of the revolutionary working class movement and consequently wages an incessant fight against opportunism.

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Already at its very inception Bolshevism has made the struggle against opportunism and against the tolerant and conciliatory attitude towards opportunism, not only in Russia, but in the entire world labor movement, one of the central tasks of a proletarian Marxian revolutionist. The need for such a struggle Lenin has expressed as far back as 1902, in his famous pamphlet "What Is to Be Done?" in the following words:

> "We are marching as a small group, holding each other firmly by the hand, along steep and precipitous paths. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies and must march nearly always under their fire. We have united in accordance with a freely adopted decision, namely, to fight against the enemy and not to land in the neighboring swamp, the inhabitants of which have calumniated us right from the first because we have united in a special group and have chosen the way of struggle instead of the way of conciliation. And now look: many of us are beginning to cry: come into the swamp! If one teaches them better they reply: What backward people you are! You are not ashamed to deny us the freedom to call you to a better way!—Oh, yes, gentlemen, you have the freedom to go wherever you want to, even into the swamp; in fact we find that the proper place for you is in the swamp. We are even prepared to help you to settle in it. But let go of our hands. Don't cling to us and do not sully the great word 'freedom,' for we are likewise free to go where we want to go; free not to go into the swamp but to fight against those who return to the swamp!"

This is how Lenin was initiating the struggle against opportunism at the birth of the Bolshevik Party. It is in the same spirit that the Communists everywhere must combat opportunism and opportunist deviations.

THE STRUGGLE ON TWO FRONTS

The fight of Leninism against opportunism and opportunist deviations is a fight on two fronts—against the right opportunism and against the "left" opportu-

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

nism, exposing and combatting all conciliation with and tolerance of opportunist deviations. At various times opportunist deviations in our midst appear in different forms, taking on different practical manifestations, but at all times it remains the reflection of the bourgeois and reformist ideology upon the working class.

The 14th Plenum of our Central Committee has stated that sectarianism "constitutes the chief obstacle in the revolutionary mass work of the Party," that the "strong *sectarian tendencies* in the entire work of the Party, as well as in the mass organizations, are based on a deeply rooted formalism." In order to overcome the sectarian tendencies, the Plenum declared that "the Party must carry on a consistent struggle against *right opportunism* as the main danger as well as against opportunism covered with "left" phrases."

The right opportunism at the present time manifests itself in an underestimation of the revolutionary upsurge, in passivity, in hesitation and outright unwillingness to place the Party at the head of the masses for the development of the proletarian counter-offensive, and in underestimation of the vital importance of building the Party in the shops and factories, white chauvinism, and in similar tendencies. The "left" opportunism expresses itself mainly in the underestimation of the importance of organizing the masses for their daily struggles, especially the economic demands, unwillingness to carry on revolutionary work in the reformist unions, the tendency to skip over the immediate practical tasks of the Party because bigger tasks confront us in the perspective, and a general narrow, sectarian attitude to the masses and to the Party's tasks among the masses. A most harmful opportunist tendency is the tendency towards a mechanical and bureaucratic treatment of the Party's work, a tendency which is common to both the right and "left" deviations.

These deviations express themselves in questions of theory and policy as well as in the daily practical work.

The Party is waging a systematic fight against the opportunist deviations in practice as well as in theory. It is especially important to follow up and expose the

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

manifestations of opportunism in our midst in the daily practical work because it is there that opportunist deviations—right and "left"—will make their appearance some time without the comrade responsible for the deviation being fully conscious of its meaning.

Under the leadership of the Communist International the Party has waged a successful struggle against opportunism on two fronts. This is how it succeeded in defeating and freeing the Party from the right Lovestone opportunists and from the Cannon-Trotskyite opportunists, both of whom find themselves at the present time in the camp of the enemy.

But the successful fight against opportunist deviations requires on the part of every Party member the utmost alertness, intolerance, and irreconcilability towards opportunist deviations, especially against sectarianism and formalism. We observe however, among certain Party members, a tendency to be easy going, tolerant and conciliatory towards opportunist deviations. This is a dangerous attitude which is very harmful to the interests of the working class and to the growth of our Party. It is this attitude that Comrade Stalin attacked so sharply, branding it as "rotten liberalism" and calling upon every communist to demonstrate in practice in his everyday revolutionary work true Bolshevik intolerance of and irreconcilability with all opportunist deviations from the Leninist line.

Published by
WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS
P. O. Box 148, Sta. D New York City
Third Printing, December, 1932.

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Marxian Study Courses

for individual study and class work

Political Economy

Complete with questions and answers. Covers the Marxist theory of value, essence and methods of capitalist exploitation, division of surplus value, the causes and consequences of crises, imperialism as the higher stage of capitalism, critique of social-democratic theories concerning imperialism and democracy.

12 lessons. First 4 lessons now ready. Price 15c each

History of the Working Class

Treats the working class movement against the background of the origin and development of the main centers of bourgeois and imperialist power. The economic and political history of France, England, Germany and Russia, with special reference to the United States and the colonies of the East.

12 lessons. First 4 lessons now ready. Price 15c each

MARXIST-LENINIST PERIODICALS

THE COMMUNIST

Monthly Organ of the Communist Party on the Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism

Per copy 20c *Per year $2*

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Semi-Monthly Organ of the Communist International. A review and the lessons of the current experiences and struggles of the working class and colonial masses the world over.

Per copy 10c *Per year $2*

Order from:

WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS

P .O. BOX 148, STATION D, NEW YORK CITY

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

LITERATURE

Every member of the Communist Party and every revolutionary worker should READ, STUDY, and DISTRIBUTE among his or her fellow workers the literature of the revolutionary movement.

The Little Lenin Library

These pamphlets give a basic understanding of the principles of the revolutionary working class movement and the lessons of past struggles of the workers the world over.

The Teachings of Karl Marx 15c
The War and the Second International 20c
Socialism and War 15c
What Is to Be Done? 50c
The Paris Commune 20c
The Revolution of 1905 ..... 20c
Religion 20c

International Pamphlets

These pamphlets, selected from the International Pamphlets series, are full of facts with which every worker should be armed in his day-to-day work.

PROFITS AND WAGES, *by Anna Rochester.* Employers' incomes and workers' earnings before and during the crisis. . 10c
SOCIAL INSURANCE, *by Grace Burnham.* Presents a fighting program for full social insurance in the United States. . . . 10c
THE FRAME-UP SYSTEM, *by Vern Smith.* Famous labor cases and the development of the frame-up 10c
SPYING ON WORKERS, *by Robert W. Dunn.* The labor spy and how he works. 10c
THE AMERICAN NEGRO, *by J. S. Allen.* Conditions of the Negro farmer and worker 10c

Order these books from:

WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS

P. O. Box 148, Sta. D, New York City

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

JUL 8 '83

329.8
C737bico

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
wils
329.8 C737bico
Bittelman, Alexander, 1890-
The Communist Party in action.
3 1951 001 032 032 S

Generated at University of Maryland, College Park through HathiTrust on 2026-01-17 02:50 GMT
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001032032s / Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized

Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA